



The President's Daily Brief

14 July 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Juan Peron is moving slowly toward the presidency of Argentina. (Page 1)

There is no sign of a break in the "confrontation" between the opposition and the Allende government in Chile. (Page 2)

China is advocating direct talks between Sihanouk and the US. (Page 3)

Belgium has a proposal of its own on MBFR as an alternative to three US-sponsored options. (Page 4)

The Soviets are preparing to send an unmanned spacecraft to Mars. (Page 6)

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ARGENTINA

Juan Peron gave a curious speech to the nation last night, strongly suggesting he is prepared to become president again, rather than assuming leadership at once. He also avoided giving any details of how he would take office.

It appears that Peron is still engaged in bargaining with military and opposition party leaders in order to achieve the basis for a government of "national reconciliation."

Earlier yesterday, Congress accepted the resignation of President Hector Campora and the vice president. Raul Lastiri, president of the Chamber of Deputies, and the son-in-law of a close Peron aide, will serve as provisional president. Lastiri has reappointed Campora's cabinet, with the exception of the interior and foreign ministers.

Campora has announced that Peron's return would be accomplished with scrupulous respect for the constitution, and that a new election will be held.

The law requires the provisional president to call for an election within 30 days. This law could be altered by the Peronist legislature if it became necessary.

So far, the military are posing no obstacles to Peron's take-over. [REDACTED]

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Leftists appeared surprised by Peron's move. A strong leftist reaction can be expected from the provincial capital of Cordoba, however, where orthodox Peronists are feuding with radicals.

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CHILE

President Allende is making no visible progress toward pushing the opposition back from its "confrontation" with the government. Government spokesmen have been hinting that they are willing to compromise on a number of contentious issues, and Allende has offered the blandishment of a "dialogue" with the Christian Democrats. The opposition, however, has rejected such overtures until the government disarms its supporters and makes other concessions.

Publicly, the government denies that arms have been issued to anyone, calling the charge a fabrication by the opposition. Privately, Allende professes to be upset by the widespread distribution of arms and the failure of the parties in his coalition to end the practice.

The armed forces and police have raided a few suspected arms caches, but do not appear to have captured much and have avoided clashes with armed civilians. Allende's supporters are in no mood for dialogue or compromise and would rather press ahead with radical reforms.

A break in the impasse could be dangerous to Allende if it comes from the armed forces, which are uneasily watching developments that could lead to serious violence. Coup plotting among some military men has not abated, but neither is there any sign of significant progress toward an attempt to seize the government. General Prats, commander of the army, is still opposed to a military coup, and is trying--so far unsuccessfully--to bring the opposition to compromise with Allende.

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CHINA-CAMBODIA

Peking is continuing to advocate direct talks
between Prince Sihanouk and the US.

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Sihanouk, however, is continuing to take a strongly negative stance on the subject of discussions with the US. Yesterday he told the press in Peking that he will leave next week for a three-week visit to North Korea. The Prince added that even if he has returned to Peking by the time of Dr. Kissinger's arrival, neither he nor any member of his "government" would be in contact with Kissinger.

Sihanouk has in the past attached great importance to direct negotiations with the US, and so it is unlikely that his current line represents an absolute unwillingness to talk. In exchange for negotiations and a cease-fire, however, Sihanouk is continuing to demand that the US accept such preconditions as an end to US bombing in Cambodia and the removal of the current political leadership in Phnom Penh.

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MBFR

Belgian representatives have proposed in NATO an alternative to US proposals for troop reductions. It calls for two-phase negotiations aiming first at a 17-percent reduction of Soviet and American forces in Europe, to be followed by a reduction in all other Eastern and Western forces to a level of overall parity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The Belgian proposal is intended to provide ground for compromises between those of the NATO allies who want to emphasize Soviet-American cuts, and those who want reductions in national forces as well.

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PAKISTAN-FRANCE

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NOTES

USSR: Preparations are being made at Tyuratam for the launch of an SL-12 space booster that probably will send an unmanned spacecraft to Mars. The most favorable period for such a mission will be between July 19 and August 14. The Soviets may launch two or three probes to Mars during this period as they did in 1971.

South Vietnam: Fighting has increased somewhat, particularly in the central highlands, largely because Saigon forces are challenging earlier Communist "landgrabbing." The government has begun clearing operations in other parts of the country as well, and this may bring a still higher level of fighting. Thus far, however, there is no sign that either side is bringing reinforcements into areas where clashes are now taking place.

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